1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

[p.43c]

322 is sold in Pátzcuaro, where there is a broom
438 factory.

MISCELLANEOUS PROCESSES

237 *Wax bleaching and candlemaking.*—Beeswax is often bleached by exposure to the sun. Melted wax is poured into bowls so that it forms a thin shell over the inside. These shells are removed and exposed to the sun for several days until the wax becomes white. Although the wax loses weight by this process, it sells for no more than unbleached wax. The extra [461] effort thus apparently results in an economic loss, making the motivations for the work somewhat obscure. Although men do all other work [462] connected with beekeeping, women often bleach the wax.

394 Candles are made by men. Two candlemakers are reputed to live in Cherán. The only one who could be located was always so drunk at the time of interviewing that little reliability can be attached to the data secured

[p.44a]

394 from him. Wicks are attached to nails in a wheellike frame and are then dipped repeatedly in liquid wax until the candles reach the desired thickness. The frame is suspended from the ceiling by a rope.

532 *Paper flowers.*—The women of one rather large household make paper flowers for funerals and paper ornaments for weddings. It was impossible to establish satisfactory contacts to learn details.

326 *Blacksmithing.*—Cherán has one reputed blacksmith. The individual concerned was never found at home, nor could any details concerning his techniques be learned.

256 438 *Baking.*—A baker of sweetened breads (*pan dulces*) established himself in Cherán in 1943. He baked daily in a regular local oven belonging to one of the wealthier storekeepers. The bread was sold with the aid of a boy, who carried it about town in a big basket hat such as is used in Mestizo towns in the neighborhood. Information on sales was refused, but probably they were between $10 and $12 a day at three breads for 5 centavos. Expenses each day were 1 *arroba* (25 pounds) of flour, $3.62; 1 kilo (2.2 pounds) of lard, $1.50; 3 kilos of sugar, $1.08; or a cash outlay of $6.20, plus the labor of baker and vendor. This does not take into account the firewood for heating the oven. Profits evidently at best hardly justify the secrecy shown.

389 *Fireworks.*—At least one man in Cherán makes fireworks, both *cohetes* (explosive rockets) and *castillos* (set pieces built about a tall pole). The one man interviewed was born in Pichataro (which suggests he may be Mestizo in origin, although he apparently regards himself as a Tarascan) and learned the trade from his father.

Materials used in the manufacture of *cohetes* are niter, chlorate, sulfur, paper, agave fiber cord, and shakes. The worker interviewed makes *cohetes* only on order. He by no means supplies all the Cherán market.

Castillos likewise are made only on order. It is a general rule that *castillos* be bought outside the town, so the Cherán *cohetero* has never made a *castillo* for a Cherán fiesta. In 1940 he made *castillos* for San Felipe, Cheranástico, Ahuiran, and Pichataro.

Materials for *castillos* are necessarily quite

294 433 434 [435] Some persons make and sell finished garments. Men's trousers or blouses require about 2½ meters of material, at an average cost of about 30 centavos a meter. One woman specializes in children's garments. She claims to make 3 to 4 dozen children's garments a week, selling them at 80 centavos to $2.50 apiece (including materials). Her profits vary. A child's rayon dress requiring $1.50 worth of material she sold for $1.75, while for a cotton dress requiring $0.40 worth of material she charged $0.80.

[439] All fitted or tailored garments, which are growing in popularity, are imported. A widely heard comment was that anyone in Cherán who could make and fit garments, especially men's shirts, would make great profits.

MINOR ACTIVITIES

433 434 [394] *Candlemaking:*

Cost of wax (per kilo)	
Sales of candles from 1 kilo of wax	$2.25–$2.50
Possible profit (excluding labor and equipment)	$0.50–$1.00

[283] *Rope making (horsehair):*

Horsehair $0.50 per kilo	$0.37½
Labor	1 day
Sale price	$1.50
Gross profit per day	$1.12½

Comment: Only one man was found who made ropes. No data were secured on agave fiber ropes made by the same man, nor on the time taken in marketing and securing raw materials. As all the equipment is home-made and very little capital is needed, the gross profit probably is close to net profit except for the factors mentioned.

295 433 434 *Shoemaking:*

Equipment:

Sewing machine	$55.00
Lasts	?
Knives	?

Labor:

1 cheap pair of shoes per day is produced by a shoemaker and 2 unpaid apprentices

[435] Value of product (per pair) $3.00–7.00

Estimated gross income:

Per day	1.50
Per pair of shoes	1.50–3.50

Comment: No clear picture of the economics of this industry was secured. The selection and purchase of hides involves knowledge of tanning, size, and quality of the hide. Guarache makers apparently earn as little as 20 centavos a day, but there are no full-time professionals in town. All local manufacturers make guaraches to order and in claiming they make only one pair a day, they probably mean they do not attempt to make more than one pair a day.

281 435 434 *Tanning:*

Charge per cowhide	$5.00–$10.00
Charge per sheepskin	.50
Average daily return	1.25